

*Northern Ireland Curriculum Review*

# *Report on First Consultation*

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*Report of the Consultation  
on Phase 1 of the  
Curriculum Review*



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# Executive Summary

## 1 SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

There was overwhelming support, in the region of 90% in most cases, for the proposed refinement of the aim, objectives, values, skills and access statement of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

<b>Aim</b>	<b>91.4%</b> of respondents supported the proposal to alter the aim of the NIC to: <i>enable young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.</i>						
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>91.4%</b> of respondents supported the proposal to define the objectives as the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>the individual;</i></li><li>• <i>the individual as a contributor to society;</i></li><li>• <i>the individual as a contributor to the economy and environment.</i></li></ul>						
<b>Values</b>	<b>89.9%</b> of respondents supported the proposal to define the values underpinning the Northern Ireland Curriculum in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Individual uniqueness and capacity for growth;</i></li><li>• <i>Equality, justice and democracy;</i></li><li>• <i>The environment and sustainability;</i></li><li>• <i>The right to be prepared for the world of work.</i></li></ul>						
<b>Generic Skills</b>	<b>86.7%</b> of respondents supported the proposal to define the generic skills under the headings: <table border="1"><tr><td><i>1 Personal skills</i></td><td><i>2 Interpersonal skills</i></td><td><i>3 Thinking skills</i></td></tr><tr><td><i>4 Learning skills</i></td><td><i>5 ICT skills</i></td><td><i>6 Physical skills</i></td></tr></table>	<i>1 Personal skills</i>	<i>2 Interpersonal skills</i>	<i>3 Thinking skills</i>	<i>4 Learning skills</i>	<i>5 ICT skills</i>	<i>6 Physical skills</i>
<i>1 Personal skills</i>	<i>2 Interpersonal skills</i>	<i>3 Thinking skills</i>					
<i>4 Learning skills</i>	<i>5 ICT skills</i>	<i>6 Physical skills</i>					
<b>Access Statement</b>	<b>90.6%</b> of respondents supported the proposal to broaden the access statement to emphasize equality of opportunity for all pupils.  <b>87.2%</b> of respondents supported the proposal to outline how the NIC may be modified to be relevant to pupils with special education needs.						

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the revised framework for the Northern Ireland Curriculum be adopted, subject to minor refinements in wording in the light of consultation.

### **Key Stages 1 and 2**

There was very strong support for the proposals to improve the balance, coherence and flexibility at Key Stages 1 and 2.

**Key Stage 1**                **78.4%** of respondents supported the proposal for greater flexibility at Key Stage 1, and a less formal Year 1.

**Key Stage 2**                **87.0%** of respondents supported the proposal for greater flexibility at Key Stage 2.

*The lower support at Key Stage 1 reflects opposition from 10%, and uncertainty among 11.5%, of respondents about a less formal Year 1. These respondents were concerned in particular about the views of parents.*

### **Key Stage 3**

There was significant support for a discrete programme of Personal Development at Key Stage 3 but less support for discrete programmes in Citizenship and Employability. There was very little support for the proposals to improve the balance of the curriculum at Key Stage 3 by prescribing percentage time for subjects.

**Personal Education**    **74.3%** of respondents supported the proposal for a discrete programme at Key Stages 3 and 4.

**Citizenship**                **55.7%** of respondents supported the proposal for a discrete programme of citizenship at Key Stage 3.

**Employability**            **58.3%** of respondents supported the proposal for a discrete programme of employability at Key Stages 3 and 4.

**% Time Allocation**    **59.7%** of respondents **disapproved** of the proposal to specify the percentage time to be allocated to each subject.

### **Key Stage 4**

A range of qualitative views was expressed by respondents. These have helped to inform the proposals for greater flexibility at Key Stage 4, which will be consulted upon in the Spring Term 2001.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that detailed Proposals are developed during Phase 2 of the Review on the basis of the areas which have been approved during consultation. (*For more detailed recommendations see main report.*)

### **Main Issues raised by Primary Schools**

The overwhelming majority of respondents welcomed the clarity of the revised framework, but assurances were sought that this was not *just another change for change sake*.

Primary respondents urged the need for a concurrent review of assessment and, in particular, the Transfer Test. This view was very strongly articulated at seminars. Respondents felt that the proposed framework, while welcome, could not be implemented because of the distorting effect of the Transfer Test, which, together with end of Key Stage Assessment, led to an over concentration on the teaching of Maths and English.

The majority of primary respondents indicated that they did not value the outcomes of Key Stage Assessment, especially *with massive funding shortages in the primary sector*. Problems posed by composite classes and the role of teaching principals were issues, that needed to be addressed to ensure equality of opportunity.

### **Main Issues raised by Post-primary Schools**

There was strong opposition to the proposal to define the percentage time allocation to different subjects across the curriculum. This was considered to be impractical. Concern was also expressed about the proposal to provide discrete time for Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability. If these areas were to be introduced, Post-primary respondents stressed the need for adequate training and the provision of appropriate resources.

There was very strong support from the secondary sector (95%) for a skills-led curriculum. Respondents requested that this be backed up by a skills approach to assessment, which prepares young people for a future that requires the demonstration of skills other than those tested in pencil and paper tests. Respondents from the secondary sector also requested even greater flexibility at Key Stage 3 than seemed to be on offer, in particular in relation to disaffected pupils being required to do languages.

### **Implementation**

Responses from both sectors stressed that the success of the proposed new curriculum depended on the management of change and the importance of informing parents of the changes in the curriculum. Primary respondents were particularly insistent that any proposed changes must be properly supported, at the time of the introduction, by exemplar Schemes of Work and where possible, classroom materials.



# **MAIN REPORT**



# **1 The Consultation Process**

This report summarises the outcomes of a major period of consultation on proposals to refine the framework of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

The consultation was designed to facilitate the expression and analysis of the views of teachers and other interested individuals and organisations in Northern Ireland about the proposals arising from Phase One of the Northern Ireland Curriculum Review. The consultation period extended from May until October 2000.

The proposals, which were the subject of consultation, were drawn up by CCEA Phase 1 Working Groups comprising teachers, Teachers' Union representatives and support personnel from the Education and Library Boards and the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools, as well as employers' representatives. The proposals related to the aim, objectives, values and skills of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, as well as making recommendations relating to relevance, enjoyment, balance, coherence and flexibility at each key stage.

The proposals will be refined in the light of the feedback from this consultation. The implications of the recommendations will also be taken on board in Phase 2 of the Review, which takes place between September 2000 and June 2001. The detailed proposals arising from Phase 2 will be consulted upon from late August 2001.

## **1.1 METHODOLOGY USED IN THE CONSULTATION**

The consultation process took three forms:

- written questionnaires were distributed to all schools and key stakeholders;
- 20 consultation seminars for school representatives were held in regional Teachers' Centres;
- c.50 meetings were organised with key stakeholders (See Appendix 2).

### **Questionnaire**

All schools and key stakeholder groups were invited to complete and return a consultation questionnaire containing proposals to refine the framework of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The questionnaire was also available on the Curriculum Review Consultation website at NINE <http://www.nine.org.uk>. The quantitative responses were analysed using the statistical package SPSS. The qualitative comments were recorded, organised into specific areas and then summarised.

### **Consultation seminars for school representatives**

Primary and Post-primary schools were invited to send a representative to one of 20 consultation seminars (ten Primary and ten Post-primary), two of which were held in each Education and Library Board area during May and June 2000. At each seminar a presentation was made on the Phase 1 Curriculum Review Proposals followed by a question and answer session. (At most of the Post-primary seminars there was also an opportunity to hear from Dr John Harland (NFER) about the outcomes of the Key Stage 3 Pupil Cohort Study being conducted (on behalf of CCEA, the Department of Education and the Esme Fairburn Trust) by the National Foundation for Educational Research.) Approximately 700 teachers attended these seminars. Of these, c.500 were from the primary sector and c.200 were from the Post-primary sector.

## Meetings with key stakeholders

In addition to the school's consultation seminars, approximately 50 meetings were held with other organisations that expressed interest in the Curriculum Review. Some of the major stakeholders with whom consultation meetings were held included:

- The Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- The Department of Education;
- The Education and Training Inspectorate;
- The Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) of the Education and Library Boards;
- The support staff of the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools (CCMS);
- The staff of the Teacher Training Institutions at Queen's University, St. Mary's University College, Stranmillis University College and the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland Growth Challenge;
- The Transferor's Council; and
- A wide range of other business, community and educational organisations.

Approximately 1300 stakeholders attended these meetings. (A list of the meetings held is set out in Appendix 2. The published response of The Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly response is attached at Appendix 3.)

## 1.2 CONSULTATION SAMPLE

The report summarises views based on 426 written responses to consultation questionnaires received up until the end of October 2000. The report also takes into account the views expressed by the approximately 2000 stakeholders who attended the teachers' seminars and other meetings.

**Table 1: Distribution of Responses**

	Written responses	No. of schools responding	% Response to questionnaire	Seminar attendance
<b>Primary Sector</b>	202	131 <sup>(i)</sup>	47.4	500
<b>Special Schools</b>	16	16	3.7	–
<b>Post-primary</b>	140	69 <sup>(ii)</sup>	33.0	200
<i>of these Grammar</i>	80	33 <sup>(iii)</sup>	–	–
<i>of these Secondary</i>	60	36 <sup>(iv)</sup>	–	–
<b>Organisation</b>	23	–	5.4	1300
<b>Individual</b>	27	–	6.3	–
<b>Other</b>	18	–	4.2	–

(i) 58 anonymous primary responses

(ii) 25 anonymous Post-primary responses

(iii) 14 anonymous grammar responses

(iv) 11 anonymous secondary responses

**Note:** Multiple responses were received from some schools. The percentages used in the report are derived from the **actual number of responses**, not the number of schools.

## 2 Response to the Proposals for a Revised Curriculum Framework

### 2.1 PROPOSAL: TO ALTER THE AIM OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM

It was proposed to alter the aim of the Northern Ireland Curriculum as follows: *The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to enable young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.*

Overall Response	91.4%	5.7%	2.9%
Responses by sector	Agree %	Disagree %	Undecided %
Primary	91.0	5.0	4.0
Special	93.8	0	6.2
Post-primary*	95.0	4.3	0.7
Organisations	69.6	21.7	8.7
Individuals	90.0	10.0	0
Other	94.4	5.6	0
* Post-primary response by type			
Grammar	92.5	6.3	1.2
Secondary	98.3	1.7	0

#### 2.1.1 Support for the proposed aim

There was overwhelming support from respondents (91.4%) for the proposal to re-define **the aim** of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Many respondents welcomed the proposed aim as *appropriate for the 21st century*. Others welcomed the perceived shift towards a curriculum that was “pupil”, as opposed to “subject”, focused. In written responses and at consultation seminars many respondents expressed the view that important dimensions of the curriculum, formerly expressed in the previous aim, were not sufficiently visible in the curriculum and therefore, not sufficiently implemented. As a result many felt that *the current curriculum focuses too much on academic development. It is important that the revised curriculum should promote all areas of a child’s potential, not just the academic*. A number of respondents expressed the view that many schools were already working towards this aim and stressed that achieving it was *dependant on encouragement and enthusiasm, a positive environment and the enhancement of self esteem*.

Suggested amendments to the wording of the aim include:

- Making the aim fully inclusive by adding *to enable **all** young people to achieve their potential*;

- Replacing the word *achieve* with **develop**, to reflect the process of life-long learning;
- Adding *the breadth of their potential*, to reflect the idea of developing multiple intelligences, not just academic achievement.

### 2.1.2 Opposition to the proposed aim

Of the small minority (5.7%) who disagreed with the proposal, the majority felt that the new aim was not as strong as the original one. There was concern that spiritual and moral values should still be explicit within the stated aim, while for other respondents, the new aim *omits to recognise the fact of our unique situation in Northern Ireland. The community relations dimension must be made explicit and provide for education for young people in the 21st century in Northern Ireland.* A few respondents were concerned about the potential for *schools to be held to account by pupils/parents who fail to achieve or understand due to poor attendance or lack of interest.*

### 2.1.3 Recommendation

It is recommended that the new aim be adopted, subject to minor refinements in wording in the light of consultation.

## 2.2 PROPOSAL: TO DEFINE THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM

It was proposed that the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum should have three overlapping and interdependent curriculum objectives, which include important aspects of the current aim and current cross-curricular themes. These objectives, together with the skills framework and additional areas of entitlement (See Table 1 Appendix 4) would replace the current cross-curricular themes.

Proposed curriculum objectives:

*The Northern Ireland Curriculum should provide learning opportunities for each young person to develop as:*

- *An individual;*
- *A contributor to society; and*
- *A contributor to the economy and environment.*

<b>Overall Response</b>	<b>91.3%</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<i>Responses by sector</i>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>
<b>Primary</b>	91.0	4.5	4.5
<b>Special</b>	93.8	0	6.2
<b>Post-primary*</b>	92.9	5.7	1.4
<b>Organisations</b>	87.0	4.3	8.7
<b>Individuals</b>	95.0	5.0	0
<b>Other</b>	83.3	16.7	0
<i>* Post-primary response by type</i>			
<i>Grammar</i>	90.0	7.5	2.5
<i>Secondary</i>	96.7	3.3	0

### 2.2.1 Support for the proposed objectives

There was overwhelming support from respondents (91.3%) for the proposal to outline clear objectives for the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Respondents from all sectors welcomed the three objectives, which embrace aspects of the old aim and the cross-curricular themes. Many commented that the curriculum objectives were detailed and comprehensive, and included the development of worthy and valuable characteristics.

Some respondents were concerned about the integration of the objectives into the curriculum in a deliverable way. Some respondents referred to the perceived weakness of the cross-curricular themes, stressing *that unless the objectives are built into the curriculum, and are not just added on, it may be difficult to secure ownership of them*. Teachers would have to be clear *where their part of the curriculum contributes to the bigger picture*. A number of respondents suggested that the objectives be included in complimentary subjects so specialist teachers could teach them. Other respondent commented on the need for greater emphasis on vocational education in response to the proposed curriculum objectives.

Suggested amendments to the objectives included:

- the addition of *contributor to community* alongside *contributor to society*;
- the replacement of the word contributor by the word *member* of society;
- the expansion of the word society to include *local and global* society;
- the addition of the word *custodian* to the environment;
- greater emphasis on *vocational* education.

### 2.2.2 Opposition to the proposed objectives

Of the minority (5%) of respondents who did not agree with the proposed objectives, some were of the view that the objectives did not have a sufficiently broad educational base – *there is more to learning than society, the economy and the environment*. Some respondents

expressed concern that schools were being required to take up tasks previously carried out by the extended family and the church and felt there were implications for teacher training, social work and counselling.

### 2.2.3 Recommendation

It is recommended that the proposed objectives be adopted, subject to minor refinements in wording in the light of consultation.

## 2.3 PROPOSAL: TO DEFINE THE VALUES UNDERPINNING THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM

It was proposed that the following values be clearly stated as underpinning each of the Curriculum Objectives:

*We value:*

- *Each individual's unique capacity for spiritual, moral, emotional, physical and intellectual growth;*
- *Equality, justice and human rights within our society and our capacity as citizens to resolve conflict by democratic means;*
- *The environment as the basis of life and the need to sustain it for future generations; and*
- *Each individual's right to work and earn a living in accordance with personal preferences and attributes.*

<b>Overall Response</b>	<b>89.9%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>
<i>Responses by sector</i>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>
<b>Primary</b>	91.0	2.5	6.5
<b>Special</b>	93.8	0	6.2
<b>Post-primary*</b>	90.0	7.9	2.1
<b>Organisations</b>	82.6	13.0	4.3
<b>Individuals</b>	84.2	10.5	5.3
<b>Other</b>	88.9	11.1	0
<i>*Post-primary responses by type</i>			
<i>Grammar</i>	87.5	10.0	2.5
<i>Non-Grammar</i>	93.3	5.0	1.7

### 2.3.1 Support for the proposed values

The overwhelming majority of respondents (89.9%) welcomed the clarification of the values that underpin the curriculum as a holistic view of education *appropriate to today's society*. Many respondents felt that these values were already part of their school's mission statement. Many other contributions reflected the view that the value base of any society is of key importance to its sustainability and positive progression and was especially important to the future democracy of Northern Ireland.

- *This is the first time that values have been clearly articulated in the Northern Ireland Curriculum, not just implied. We feel it can only have a beneficial effect.*
- *These values underpin the need for individual participation and contribution in a meaningful way to our future society but there will be a need for heightened sensitivity on the part of staff to local political issues and pressures.*

Suggested amendments to the values included:

- the inclusion of creativity into value statement 1;
- the inclusion of an aesthetic dimension;
- the inclusion of cultural growth;
- placing intellectual and academic growth before physical growth;
- amending the equality statement to encompass *our world* rather than *our society*;
- rewriting value 4 which was considered “*too wordy and philosophical*”; it should reflect the individuals right *to be prepared for work; and preparation for managing time rather than work, as everyone is not guaranteed employment*;
- the insertion of the value of human life itself, eg *we value each person's life and unique capacity . . . the word **person** is stronger than individual*;
- incorporating a statement emphasising *taking responsibility for the environment and its maintenance by each individual*;
- amending value 2 to read *a fair, just and democratic society in which the human rights of all citizens are respected*;
- including respect for authority as a value, which must *surely be valued in a fair and just society and should be incorporated into the value statements*.

### 2.3.2 Opposition to the proposed values

Among the small minority (5.5%) opposed to the proposal, some were concerned that these values could not be achieved through teaching. *The whole value area is so vague it renders accountability difficult to measure so implementation may not be easy*. Concerns were expressed about the scale of the objectives and values. *It might also be a little difficult to see*

how all these principles will bed down into discrete subjects. Others felt it was important to ward against a downgrading of the intellectual dimension against the currently perceived imbalance.

### 2.3.3 Recommendation

It is recommended that the proposed values be adopted as underpinning the new objectives, subject to minor refinements in wording in the light of consultation.

## 2.4 PROPOSAL TO DEFINE THE GENERIC SKILLS OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM

It was proposed that the generic skills of the curriculum be defined under six overlapping and interdependent categories, within which a range of contributory skills were identified (see Table 2, Appendix 4) as follows:

- |                   |                        |                   |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Personal skills | 2 Interpersonal skills | 3 Thinking skills |
| 4 Learning skills | 5 ICT skills           | 6 Physical skills |

Overall Response	86.7%	5.3%	7.9%
Responses by sector	Agree %	Disagree %	Undecided %
Primary	83.4	6.0	10.6
Special	81.3	0	18.8
Post-primary	91.4	5.0	3.6
Organisations	82.6	8.7	8.7
Individuals	90.0	0	10.0
Other	94.1	5.9	0
*Post-primary responses by type			
Grammar	88.8	6.3	4.9
Secondary	95.0	3.3	1.7

### 2.4.1 Support for the proposed skills

Developing skills in pupils and making children pro-active in their own learning activities, was regarded by the majority of respondents (86.7%) as very important. Many felt that, if developed properly, these skills would be with young people for life and would be *more important than carrying knowledge of subjects. This is an excellent idea as long as a framework is clear throughout all key stages as how this is to be developed and that the necessary practical equipment, materials and of course training, becomes available before this becomes statutory.*

Many respondents requested that the programmes of study for each subject should clearly identify ways of embracing these generic skills. It was recommended that *there should be an emphasis on skills in exemplar schemes of work which should be provided by CCEA*. These needed to be supported by a range of learning activities *placing a welcome focus on methodology with clear guidance as to how these skills could be delivered across the curriculum*. It was stressed, however, that significant in-service training and resources would be required to bring teachers to appropriate levels of awareness. Many respondents also stressed the need to deal with assessment in parallel with the development of the new curriculum. *In order that the skills are taken seriously, the assessment system must demonstrate how these skills can, and will, be assessed*. The issue most frequently raised by primary respondents was how they were going to fit the new skills base into a curriculum already overburdened with Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments and the transfer procedure. Other concerns were about whether the skills would be assessed and how they would be weighted if assessed. A number of Post-primary respondents felt that ICT was given too much prominence.

#### **2.4.2 Opposition to the proposed skills**

Among the minority (5.3%) who opposed the proposal, some expressed particular reservations that *education should promise more than training and skills*. Other concerns were that emphasising skills might diminish subject content or make some subjects more desirable than others because of their capacity to deliver skills. *The idea that all that is needed is the development of skills is limited and limiting*. One respondent was so exercised by this prospect that the proposal was described as *extremely dangerous and if implemented, will set back education in Northern Ireland for years*. A few respondents questioned whether these skills could be even taught in schools. *They require deep foundations and constant reinforcement from institutions other than schools*.

#### **2.4.3 Recommendation**

It is recommended that the proposed skills be adopted, subject to minor refinements in the light of consultation.

### **2.5 PROPOSAL: TO BROADEN THE ACCESS STATEMENT THAT PRECEDES THE CURRICULUM**

It was proposed that the access statement:

- *Be broadened to emphasise equality of opportunity for all pupils;*
- *Outline how the Northern Ireland Curriculum may be modified to be relevant to pupils with special educational needs.*

<b>Overall Response</b>	<b>90.6%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
<i>Responses by sector</i>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>
<b>Primary</b>	84.5	6.0	9.5
<b>Special</b>	93.8	0	6.2
<b>Post-primary</b>	95.7	0	4.3
<b>Organisations</b>	95.7	0	4.3
<b>Individuals</b>	100.0	0	0
<b>Other</b>	100.0	0	0
<i>*Post-primary responses by type</i>			
<i>Grammar</i>	96.2	0	3.8
<i>Secondary</i>	94.9	0	5.1

### **2.5.1 Support for the proposed access statement**

These proposals were strongly endorsed by the majority of respondents (90.6%). *It is vital the curriculum enables schools to deliver a broad and balance programme for every pupil. This will require flexibility, in order that the strengths and interests of all are properly served. It embraces the needs of our statemented pupils but also takes into account the requirements of those pupils whose performance may be adversely affected by a serious change in family or personal circumstances.* The importance of ensuring that early diagnosis and recognition of a child with learning difficulties occurs was stressed so that the aim of the access statement is readily achieved. *Too often children in this category slip through and are diagnosed at Key Stage 3, by which time it is almost too late to help the individual attain equality of opportunity.* Some respondents felt that the proposal *does not seem to encompass pupils with behavioural needs nor gifted pupils.*

Some concerns were raised about the feasibility of providing equality of opportunity in large classes. For example, one respondent felt that if each child were to be considered so specifically this would necessitate smaller classes, classroom assistants and financial help to achieve. There were also reservations about the reality of the aspirations within this statement. For many respondents equality of opportunity related to funding opportunities – *all schools should be funded on an equal footing rather than most of the money being allocated to grammar and integrated schools.* Issues were highlighted in relation to categories of funding, for example, one respondent believed that *SEN is very well funded and catered for compared to the paucity of resources for those just above the SEN category.* Some respondents suggested that the development of the curriculum to encompass SEN should take place as the curriculum is being developed, not as an appendix. Others called for the expansion of qualifications to encompass courses that allow SEN pupils to show what they know, understand and can do. *How can this be accommodated in a system founded on league tables?*

### **2.5.2 Opposition to the proposed access statement in relation to equality of opportunity**

The few respondents who disagreed with the proposals (2.9%) were mainly concerned that broadening the access statement would raise parental expectation. *The risk run by incorporating a general statement like this is that parental expectations will be raised unrealistically. Specific guidelines for individual assessment are essential and the judgement of professionals must be respected. This can be difficult for parents who will be understandably unaware of the problems schools face in providing suitably modified programmes of study, differentiated activities, alternative materials and equality of opportunity.*

### **2.5.3 Recommendation**

It is recommended that the proposed skills be adopted subject to minor refinements to wording in the light of consultation.

These may be laid out differently to clarify:

- those which are developed primarily through classroom methodology and teacher-pupil relationships; and
- those which are developed primarily through subjects.

The generic skills framework may also be refined further in the light of recommendations arising from the Assessment Review Group.

### 3 Response to the Proposals for Key Stages 1 and 2

#### 3.1 PROPOSAL: TO IMPROVE THE BALANCE, COHERENCE AND FLEXIBILITY OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM AT EACH KEY STAGE

At **Key Stage 1** it was proposed that the curriculum be prescribed within five categories, with the emphasis on an integrated approach within and across the areas of:

- *Literacy;*
- *Numeracy;*
- *Creativity;*
- *Personal Development;*
- *The World About Us.*

*It was proposed that the Key Stage 1 curriculum should focus mainly on the development of skills. In Year 1 the focus should be on oracy, practical mathematics, personal development and structured play. Exemplar Schemes of Work would be developed to support these changes.*

<b>Responses by sector</b>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>
<b>Primary</b>	78.4	10.1	11.6
<b>Special</b>	68.8	6.3	25.0

##### 3.1.1 Support for the Key Stage 1 proposals

More than three quarters of primary respondents (78.4%) welcomed the proposals to improve the balance, coherence and flexibility of the curriculum and felt that children would benefit from the greater coherence. For many the proposals reflected what they were already doing – *this is nothing new*. Many respondents recognised that to achieve the *balance, coherence and flexibility* within the five areas would require careful planning, excellent schemes of work with a variety of graded skills and activities that could be practically measured and assessed. They were particularly concerned about the amount of paperwork that would have to be created to support a new curriculum and called for the production of exemplar work schemes to assist with this process. *Unless schemes of work are provided, teachers will spend too much time in preparation and not teaching*. Respondents also stressed the need for phasing in the changes and for training to support the changes in the form of more school closure days. Several respondents suggested that funding would have to be centrally sourced. The need to influence initial teacher training was also stressed. A small number of responses were in favour of introducing a second language at Key Stage 1 – *the age that it is introduced on the continent – the appropriate development age*.

The main concerns expressed related to the impact of the proposals upon base line assessment, key stage assessment and, in particular, the Transfer Procedure. The impact of the latter was considered to represent the major obstacle to implementation.

### 3.1.2 Opposition to the Key Stage 1 proposals

While most respondents believed that a less formal start would benefit the majority of pupils, there were concerns that some pupils who were ready for formal work might become bored or be inhibited from making progress. These respondents were also concerned about the impact on Year 2, especially in relation to reading. In particular, teachers stressed the need to inform parents of the rationale behind the changes.

### 3.1.3 Recommendation

It is recommended that the proposed curriculum refinements be developed by Phase 2 working groups. It is recommended that the less formal Year 1 curriculum be piloted and evaluated over the next few years and that detailed support and training be developed to assist implementation.

**3.2 At Key Stage 2 it was proposed that the curriculum be prescribed within the same five areas at Key Stage 1, but with identifiable strands within two of the five areas that relate to the emerging subject disciplines as follows:**

- *Creativity – reflecting aspects of Art and Design, Music and Physical Education;*
- *The World About Us – reflecting aspects of Science and Technology, Geography and History.*

<i>Responses by sector</i>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>
<b>Primary</b>	87.5	3.0	9.5
<b>Special</b>	68.8	12.5	18.7

There was strong agreement (87.5%) for the proposed changes for Key Stage 2. Many respondents stressed that the proposals are *similar to what many practitioners are doing at present*. The main concern was again about assessment, in particular the impact of the transfer procedure on Year 6 and Year 7. Should the transfer test remain, respondents requested the removal of science from the test as well as a reduction in the core content of the curriculum, particularly science, geography and mathematics. *Reduced content would allow teachers more time for teaching.*

School respondents felt very strongly that they should not be expected to develop more schemes of work and asked for assurances that exemplar schemes would be provided *on implementation . . . not years later*. Opposition to the proposals was negligible (3%).

### 3.3 PROPOSAL: TO PROVIDE A SPECIFIC PROGRAMME FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AS A STATUTORY ENTITLEMENT FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE FROM KEY STAGES 1 TO 4

*At Key Stages 1 and 2 the programme would comprise three elements:*

- *Personal Understanding;*
- *Personal Health; and*
- *Living in the Local and Wider Community.*

*(Materials and INSET would be provided to support this area.)*

<i>Responses by sector</i>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>
<b>Primary</b>	85.2	5.6	9.2
<b>Special</b>	75.0	6.3	18.7

#### 3.2.1 Support for Personal Development as a discrete component at Key Stages 1 and 2

The majority of primary respondents (85.2%) welcomed the proposal as relevant and essential for children in a rapidly changing society. A number of respondents highlighted the need to get the correct balance in such a programme. Many respondents stressed the need for *clearly defined content, including learning outcomes, well-structured materials, resources and schemes of work, supported by in-service training*. These needed to be available *well before implementation of the programme – not afterwards!* Finding the time to implement the programme was a major concern. Respondents stressed again that the core curriculum needed to be slimmed down to provide this time.

#### 3.2.2 Opposition to Personal Development at Key Stages 1 and 2

The minority of respondents who did not support the proposal (5.6%) felt that this area was the responsibility of parents and doubted the extent to which *schools could impact on these areas when changes needed to be supported by society at large*. Some felt that if teachers became involved in these areas it could put more pressure on teacher/parent relationships. Others expressed the view that children were currently losing out on the basics because teachers have too many areas to cover in the present curriculum.

#### 3.2.3 Recommendation

It is recommended that a programme of Personal Development is made statutory at Key Stages 1 and 2, subject to support and training being provided, as requested in consultation.

## 4 Response to the Proposals for Key Stage 3

**Proposal: to improve the relevance and enjoyment of the Northern Ireland Curriculum for all learners**

### 4.1 PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE A SPECIFIC PROGRAMME FOR *PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT* AS A STATUTORY ENTITLEMENT FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE FROM KEY STAGES 1 TO 4

*At Key Stages 3 and 4 the programme for Personal Development would comprise two elements:*

- *Personal Understanding;*
- *Personal Health.*

*(Materials and INSET would be provided to support this area.)*

<b>Responses by sector</b>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>
<b>Post-primary</b>	74.3	17.9	7.8
<b>Grammar</b>	72.5	20.0	7.5
<b>Secondary</b>	76.7	15.0	8.3
<b>Special</b>	37.5	56.3	6.3

#### 4.1.1 Support for Personal Development as a discrete component at Key Stage 3

The majority of Post-primary respondents (74.3%) agreed with the proposal. Many respondents recognised the advantageous of such a programme. *We have grappled continuously with the need to provide a valid and relevant PSE programme for all pupils. If the proposal achieves the stated objectives then it will be worthwhile. Any proposed programme should enable schools to incorporate existing PSE work that has been developed in a structured way over many years and should be flexible enough to allow schools to adopt them to local needs.* Road safety and driving skills were suggested as relevant topics for inclusion.

A pre-piloted programme, supported by materials was requested in advance of any implementation date. A number of respondents asked for a structured programme *similar to the materials produced in the Republic of Ireland.* Conversely, other respondents reflected on the funding required. *This can be taught very well by teachers without the need for money being wasted in production of a lot of material which is basically common sense. As much money as possible needs to go directly to pupils' education, in the form of more teachers and smaller classes.*

CCEA was requested to take a lead role in drawing up a list of recognised and skilled agencies that could assist teachers in delivering specific items in the programme, for example, drug addiction, smoking and alcohol abuse. Guidelines on the selection of appropriate resources, textbooks and teaching materials were also requested. *The success of any Personal Education programme depends upon a complementary mix of effective teaching of theory and the competent relaying of up to date information by representatives from outside agencies.*

Training of teachers was recognised as very important in the success of this proposal. *Training should ensure that all teachers are aware of how to integrate elements within their programmes of work.* It was also stressed that this area should be addressed in initial teacher training. It was felt that Personal Health must be developed by educationalists, not health professionals *who have a different agenda to which most teachers would not subscribe.*

#### **4.1.2 Opposition to a discrete programme of Personal Development at Key Stage 3**

Nearly 18% of respondents disagreed with the proposal. Most of these respondents were in support of having the content delivered on a cross curricular basis, citing that *this already exists in the educational themes – specifically in health education. This is very well implemented in many schools. Separate modular provision runs the risk of being sterile.* Many felt Personal Development issues *can be integrated into other subjects without the need for the reduction of subject time and money wasted on it.* For many schools delivery of such a programme could only be achieved through a religious education programme.

Some teachers doubted that relevance and enjoyment would be improved through offering Personal Education. *All subjects should be delivered through content and methodology that prepares our pupils for the adult world – not a new programme as such. As for relevance, it takes a clear mature mind to appreciate the relevance of all aspects of the curriculum – many pupils under the age of 16 lack such maturity.*

#### **4.1.3 Recommendation**

It is recommended that a programme of Personal Development is made statutory at Key Stages 3 and 4, subject to support being provided, as requested in consultation.

## **4.2 PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE A SPECIFIC PROGRAMME FOR CITIZENSHIP AS A STATUTORY ENTITLEMENT FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AT KEY STAGE 3**

*At Key Stages 3 the programme for Citizenship would comprise two elements:*

- *clarifying personal and social values in relation to the core concepts of diversity/interdependence; equality/justice; democracy/active participation; and*
- *engagement in democratic processes.*

*(Materials and INSET would be provided to support this area.)*

<b>Responses by sector</b>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>
<b>Post-primary</b>	55.7	30.0	14.3
<b>Grammar</b>	48.8	35.0	16.2
<b>Secondary</b>	65.0	23.3	11.7
<b>Special</b>	43.8	50.0	6.3

#### **4.2.1 Support for a discrete programme of Citizenship at Key Stage 3**

A small majority of post primary respondents (55.7%) welcomed the proposal to provide a programme for Citizenship. There was significantly stronger support from the secondary (65%) as opposed to the grammar sector (48.8%). Many respondents emphasised that the programme would need to be specifically tailored to meet the needs of Northern Ireland. *We have a chance to mould, for ourselves in Northern Ireland, a programme that is specific to our needs and aspirations as well as encompassing the broader issues/concepts of democratic citizenship to be found in most liberal democracies.* A few respondents were of the view that the definition of Citizenship was too narrow and that it should be widened to include a European/global dimension.

Many respondents emphasised that schools would need considerable support to introduce this programme. *We have no specialist teachers – it will not be easy to develop a course that will appeal to pupils and be seen as relevant to their lives.* A few respondents highlighted class size as being important. *This should be seen as a practical class with no more than 20 pupils to make it more meaningful.* Some respondents felt that the concept of Citizenship would develop with maturity. *It would not be appropriate to stop Citizenship education at the end of Key Stage 3. The outworking of the concept changes with the age and maturity of the young person. There ought to be progression through all the key stages.*

#### **4.2.2 Opposition to a discrete programme of Citizenship at Key Stage 3**

A significant minority of post primary respondents (30%) did not agree with the proposal to provide a specific programme of Citizenship. Among the wide range of views expressed, those most frequently cited were in relation to:

##### ***Time allocation***

Many respondents opposed to the proposal, particularly from the grammar sector, questioned the amount of time proposed, not only for Citizenship, but also for Personal Development and Employability.

##### ***Cross-curricularity***

A significant number of respondents felt that Citizenship should be *integrated into relevant areas of the curriculum and should not exist as an individual subject. These elements already exist in Education for Mutual Understanding and are very well implemented in many schools.* Some felt that Citizenship has more to do with school ethos. *It is perhaps wise to provide some teaching on some of the key concepts and the working of public institutions, but this could happen within subjects.*

##### ***Content appropriateness***

A significant number of the secondary respondents who opposed the proposal felt that staff would find the proposed concepts abstract and difficult to deliver. *Our pupils would struggle to cope with many of the topics listed although some are very relevant.* They felt that Citizenship was not in keeping with the age/interests of Key Stage 3 pupils and were doubtful of the benefit to be gained from devoting specific time on the timetable. *It should be taught at a very basic level, as is done at present in subjects such as History and RE.*

## *Sensitivity*

A few respondents were against the proposal on the grounds of its controversial focus. While some of these respondents applauded the ideals enshrined in the proposed programme they felt that *it would be difficult to implement, given the political climate in Northern Ireland. History and tradition, plus home environment, are hard to challenge. This subject could not be implemented without prejudice. It is dependent on staffing or school location.*

## *Political appropriateness*

Some of the respondents suggested that there was an underlying political agenda and that this was not a legitimate role for a school to pursue. *Personal and social values and citizenship are the domain of the parent who is the prime educator of a child. For schools to impinge/interfere even more into the realms of parenting is fundamentally flawed thinking. Schools cannot, and must not, be held responsible for all the ills of society.*

### **4.2.3 Recommendation**

It is recommended that the pilot programme of Citizenship, currently being developed in 25 schools, should be extended, with the support of the Education and Library Boards, to all the schools interested in developing this area of the curriculum with young people. During the pilot stage, a range of approaches to incorporating citizenship into the curriculum (both discrete and cross-curricular) should be evaluated. The views of teachers, school management and young people about the pilot should be used to inform further advice to the Minister about the status of, and approach to, this area prior to the phased implementation of the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum in September 2003.

## **4.3 IT WAS PROPOSED TO PROVIDE A SPECIFIC PROGRAMME FOR EMPLOYABILITY AS A STATUTORY ENTITLEMENT FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AT KEY STAGES 3 AND 4**

*At Key Stages 3 and 4 the programme for Employability would comprise three elements:*

- work in the global economy;*
- career management; and*
- skills and qualities for work.*

*(Materials and INSET would be provided to support this area.)*

<i>Responses by sector</i>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>
<b>Post-primary</b>	58.3	29.5	12.2
<i>Grammar</i>	53.8	36.3	9.9
<i>Secondary</i>	64.4	20.3	15.3
<b>Special</b>	50.0	50.0	0

### 4.3.1 Support for a discrete programme of Citizenship at Key Stages 3 and 4

A small majority of Post-primary respondents (58.3%) supported this proposal. As was the case with Citizenship, there was significantly greater support for this proposal from the secondary (64.4%) as opposed to the grammar (53.8%) sector.

Those in favour of the proposal felt that emphasising preparation for employability would highlight for pupils the importance of their wider curriculum and the skills that can be developed. *Pupils should be encouraged to desire work and understand the contribution the world of work can make to their lives in terms of independence, lifestyles, standards of living, good mental health and general social skills.*

There was significant debate about the age at which a specific programme on employability should be introduced. A number of respondents, particularly from secondary schools, stressed the need for Employability to be introduced at Key Stage 3, as many pupils leave school at 16. The majority considered that skills and qualities for work should be included from Year 10 and the remaining elements in Year 11 and 12. A significant number of respondents from grammar schools (53.8%) also supported an emphasis on employability from the end of Key Stage 3. *Although most of our pupils stay at school post-16, it is the attitudes, social skills, creativity and enterprise skills that need to be emphasised so that young people are personally prepared for the competitive environments they will face after school, whether at university or in career paths.* Some respondents felt, however, that *Pupils are still too immature to grasp the concepts at Key Stage 3. Employability is already being delivered at Key Stage 4 under the existing curriculum and work experience programmes.*

There was also debate about whether or not Employability should be treated as a separate entity. Some respondents were unclear about the relationship between the term employability and careers education. *Employability should not have separate time allocation but be included in careers' classes or on a modular basis.*

Others were unclear about whether or not the proposal indicated a cross-curricular and a specific approach. *Employability is an important aspect of education that cuts across all areas of the curriculum. It should be a main aspect of all subjects and PSE. Pupils should be informed about career opportunities and standards demanded in all subjects . . . the elements should be assessed within subjects. To isolate Employability as a stand-alone course may only marginalise its importance for students, staff and parents. It may be more suitable to integrate it within Careers Education as a cross-curricular, educational theme.*

As with other aspects of the proposals, respondents emphasised that adequate time will be needed for schools to develop appropriate materials and approaches to address this programme. Respondents also raised staffing implications and were concerned that non-specialist staff would deliver this programme. *To be successful this programme would need to expose pupils to the world of work and stronger partnerships between business and schools need to be developed.* There was concern that, with the world of work changing so quickly, that the proposed programme would be flexible enough to adapt to these changing views.

### 4.3.2 Opposition to a discrete programme of Employability at Key Stage 3

Almost 30% of respondents did not agree with this proposal (36% of grammar and 20% of secondary respondents). Among these, the two most prominent views expressed were in relation to:

#### *Time and emphasis*

There was concern that employability was becoming the core objective of the curriculum, instead of each pupil's personal development being at the core.

#### *Appropriateness and enjoyment*

Some respondents, particularly those from grammar schools, questioned the appropriateness and enjoyment of this programme for Key Stage 3 pupils. Some felt it might bring unwarranted pressure and expectations at a time in their lives when pupils should be thinking in broader terms. The relevance of the elements was questioned, particularly for grammar schools *where most pupils are likely to defer entering work until higher education is complete. How motivating would the element Skills and Qualities for Work really be?*

### 4.3.3 Recommendation

It is recommended that a programme of Employability is piloted and evaluated in a range of schools, incorporating both discrete and cross-curricular approaches. The outcomes of the pilot should be used to inform further advice to the Minister about the status of and approach to this area, prior to the implementation of the revised Northern Ireland Curriculum from September 2003.

## 4.4 OVERALL COMMENTS ON DISCRETE PROVISION FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, CITIZENSHIP, EMPLOYABILITY AND ICT

The time allocated to Personal Development, Citizenship, Employability and Information and Communications Technology generated considerable comment, especially in relation to the amount of suggested curriculum time to be allocated. *Suggesting the allocation of 12.5% of curriculum time seems to imply that these skills cannot be delivered across the curriculum, yet there are strong elements of these in subjects such as Geography, History, Careers Education and especially Religious Education. Programmes for such subjects as Personal Development would need to be very clear and easily assessed rather than a mish-mash that makes teaching difficult and pupils bored.*

There was concern from some in the secondary sector that the proposed increase in curriculum content would offer little to motivate pupils in secondary schools, especially reluctant learners. *Adding new subjects at Key Stage 3 will create difficulties for pupils, especially those of average and below average abilities.* The majority of the pupils in this type of school would struggle with a lot of the subject matter and concepts – *12.5% on Personal Development, Citizenship, Employability are far too much for our pupils – more needs to be spent on the basics of literacy and numeracy.* Some respondents felt that pupils of average and below average ability needed more practical “hands on” experience. This

view was supported by a number of respondents who believe that *pupils learn more and develop more through the medium of traditional subjects taught by enthusiastic, expert teachers.*

There were suggestions that Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability be incorporated into tutor group time. A few suggested the merging of Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability into a single programme of study with 5% allocation, accompanied by a reduction in content in other subject areas. Concern was also raised that *provision of these subjects by untrained staff, who are not committed to these areas, could well be hugely counter-productive.* To address this concern teachers demanded in-service training to support these new curriculum areas.

#### **4.5 PROPOSAL: TO IMPROVE THE BALANCE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM AT KEY STAGE 3**

At Key Stage 3 it was proposed that an average percentage time allocation of roughly 10% for English, maths and science and 5% for most other subjects, be used in Phase 2

- *As a basis for the review of subject content; and*
- *As a recommended basis for subsequent time-table allocation in order to:*
  - *ensure breadth and balance across the full range of experiences; and*
  - *enable all teachers an equivalent opportunity to address the generic skills and issues of effective teaching and learning.*

<i>Response by sector</i>	<b>Agree %</b>	<b>Disagree %</b>	<b>Undecided %</b>
<b>Post-primary</b>	20.9	59.7	19.4
<i>Grammar</i>	15.0	67.5	17.5
<i>Secondary</i>	28.8	49.2	22.0
<b>Special</b>	12.5	62.5	25.0

##### **4.5.1 Opposition to the proposal to prescribe balance by defining the percentage time**

The proposal to use percentage time allocation as a basis for the review of subject content, and possibly as a basis for subsequent timetable allocation, caused the most comment and suggested more amendments than any other proposals.

Almost 60% of respondents disagreed with the proposal (67% of grammar and 49% of secondary respondents). From the strength and variety of the comments voiced, it was clear that schools felt strongly that the 100% subject time allocation suggested in the proposals was unacceptable and did not leave them sufficient flexibility to decide both what was best for their pupils and *their own ethos and vision.* The following selection of comments gives some flavour of the strength of opinion voiced:

- *to make this time allocation statutory would be a complete negation of the expressed intention to improve flexibility;*
- *the proposed time allocation, or any variant of it, does not facilitate pupils learning. It diffuses teacher expertise without ensuring the desired breadth and balance of a range of learning experiences;*
- *it suggests an overtly fragmented curriculum which would be confusing for young people and their parents;*
- *the fragmentation runs against current thinking which seeks to provide a more integrated, holistic, educational experience for young people.*

Concern was highlighted at the reduction in time allocation for nearly all subjects, in particular English, mathematics and science. Some welcomed reduction in science allocation, *if the content was also reduced considerably*. The question of current assessment measures and value systems would also need to change to match the proposed programme, *otherwise actual provision within the schools will remain as it is, reflecting what is being measured/valued through assessment, irrespective of the curriculum*. There was also unease that subject time reduction would impact on preparation for GCSEs. *In our own school History, Geography, Art, Music and Languages will each lose 40 minutes per week in Year 10. This is bound to leave students less prepared for these GCSE subjects*. Others felt that these subjects would be eroded to accommodate the new curriculum. Some Special Schools also expressed concern. *The priority for Special Schools is that their pupils leave school functionally literate and numerate – this table did not allow this to occur. There is a need to allow flexibility for schools to develop particular courses not included above.*

In relation to provision for Languages, some felt strongly that:

- *5% for Language is insufficient for those who wish to pursue a career in Languages and it would be impossible to impart a meaningful programme of study in so little time;*
- *less emphasis on Language was a retrograde step in the light of European developments; and*
- *either only one Language should be required to be studied (secondary schools mainly);*
- *the % time allocation would work to the detriment of Irish and Latin teachers, possibly resulting in their demise.*

### ***Support for the proposal to prescribe balance by defining percentage time***

A small minority of respondents agreed with the proposal (21%) while almost 20% were undecided. Significantly more secondary school respondents were in favour of the proposal (29%) as opposed to 15% of responses from grammar schools.

Many of those in favour of the proposed time allocations highlighted the need for some kind of mechanism to ensure that all pupils have a common entitlement. *At present the difference between the curricula offered in different school can vary hugely. The findings of the Cohort Study were a real shock and I agree with the findings that we cannot really claim to have a Northern Ireland curriculum at all with these kinds of differences.*

A few respondents questioned the amount of time given to “the big five subjects” – English, Maths, Science, Modern Languages and RE, especially in maintained schools. *I find it refreshing that those subjects should be asked to justify their time by virtue of their relevance and enjoyment and not by tradition or the fact that they are lucky enough to be assessed. Sometimes it seems that schools are for teachers and subjects, and not for pupils. Who is going to be brave enough to question the time given to RE?* Other respondents highlighted the need to create time for pupil and other social and economic priorities. A number of these respondents shared the following view. *The time allocated for many subjects can often be based on long-standing tradition in a school. Our senior management finds it hard to challenge traditional subject time allocations. This proposal has been really unpopular because all the Departments have had their say. All the power blocks are offended at the same time! Surely the pupils are telling us that a lot of our emphasis is no longer appropriate for them? Somebody has to lay down some kind of ground-rules.*

#### **4.5.2 Recommendation**

Given the evidence provided by the Cohort Study of the very significant difference across schools in the time allocated to subjects, it is recommended that the % time allocation proposed is used during Phase 2 of the review only as a basis for defining “a minimum entitlement” within all subjects. The Council will explore other mechanisms for ensuring balance at Key Stage 3 and will provide guidance on this in good time to allow schools to plan for the implementation of the revised curriculum in September 2003.

## **5 Response to Consultation on Future Flexibility at Key Stage 4**

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is controlled in a number of ways:

- It is prescribed in terms of Areas of Study;
- Some subjects have detailed Programmes of Study at Key Stage 4, for example, English;
- Other subjects have only an outline Programme of Study;
- Subject content is also regulated through GCSE subject criteria.

In order to inform proposals for greater flexibility at Key Stage 4, to be consulted upon in the Spring of 2001, views were sought on the most appropriate curriculum framework for 14–16 year olds, bearing in mind considerations relating to:

- keeping career options open;
- ensuring an essential entitlement, alongside flexibility.

### **5.1 THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CURRICULUM AT KEY STAGE 4**

The majority of respondents expressed the view that the revised curriculum framework (in terms of its aim, objectives, values and skills) was also appropriate for 14–16 year olds, who also need to be provided with appropriate learning opportunities to help each young person develop as:

- an individual;
- a contributor to society;
- a contributor to the economy and the environment.

### **5.2 BREADTH AND FLEXIBILITY**

There was support for maintaining breadth within the curriculum for 14–16 year olds. Many felt, however, that the present “Areas of Study” approach, while providing a form of breadth, did not give schools, particularly secondary schools, sufficient flexibility to enable them to tailor the Key Stage 4 curriculum to meet the needs of individual pupils. *The present system may work for the academic pupil, but it is over prescriptive for many pupils.* The provision of different types of programmes, with subsequent variation of assessment arrangements, was seen as a way of ensuring that the aspirations, aptitudes and abilities of individual pupils could be fully met. *The opportunity should be available at Key Stage 4 to include a balanced mix of GCSEs and vocational courses.*

### 5.3 CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION

Respondents also strongly supported the development of a Key Stage 4 framework that built on Key Stage 3 and that provided a firm foundation for study beyond 16. There were calls for strong alignment across 14–19. Many considered that there was over control of the subject requirements at Key Stage 4. The majority were in favour of having a range of types of courses and qualifications available to pupils in the 14–16 age range. *Because of the focus on qualifications at this key stage, little practical use is made of the statutory programmes of study.* Respondents therefore recommended that these should be discontinued.

### 5.4 ESSENTIAL ENTITLEMENT

There was a strong plea that young people should be better prepared for the World of Work. *A good Personal and Social Development course, including citizenship and careers/employability, will raise awareness of life-long learning.* Such a course should identify the generic skills required by young people for employment. In addition, if greater flexibility and choice were to be available at Key Stage 4, there was recognition that comprehensive and impartial careers provision needed to be available in order that all pupils could make informed choices. *14–16 year olds develop at different rates and will change their minds about careers. Guidance at this stage is essential.*

Many respondents also highlighted the increasing role which information and communications technology is playing, not only in the work place, but also in all areas of living. There was strong support for ICT competence to be a feature in the learning of all young people.

Accordingly, consultation supported a “core” entitlement for all pupils at Key Stage 4 with some consensus for the inclusion of:

- Key Skills, including a strong component of ICT;
- Personal Development (to include social and health education);
- Citizenship; and
- Careers/Employability.

#### 5.4.1 Recommendation

The views expressed in consultation should be used to inform proposals for Key Stage 4 which:

- ensure an essential entitlement;
- provide maximum flexibility.

## **Appendix 1: List of Respondents**

### **Primary School Responses**

Anonymous Responses Primary Schools × 61

Academy Primary, Saintfield

All Saints Primary, Banbridge

Ampertaine Primary

Anahilt Primary

Andrews Memorial Primary

Ballycarrickmaddy Primary

Ballydown Primary

Ballyholme Primary, Bangor

Ballylifford Primary

Ballymagee Primary

Ballysally Primary

Ben Madigan Prep × 2

Bridge Integrated Primary

Bronte Primary

Broughshane Primary

Brownlee Primary, Lisburn

Bunscoil Phobal Feirste, Belfast × 2

Burnfoot Primary, Dungiven

Cairnshill Primary, Belfast

Carnaghts Primary

Carryduff Primary

Castle Gardens Primary

Cedar Integrated Primary

Christ The King Primary, Omagh

Comber Primary, Comber

Convent of Mercy Primary, Rostrevor

Convent of Mercy Primary, Downpatrick

Craigavon Primary

Crossroads Primary, Kilrea

Desertmartin Primary

Dromara Primary

Drumaghlis Primary × 3

Dundonald Primary

Edenderry Primary, Banbridge

Elmgrove Primary, Belfast

Enniskillen Model Primary

Erganagh Primary, Castlederg

Fairview Primary, Ballyclare × 2

Fane Street Primary, Belfast

Garvagh Primary School

Gilnahirk Primary

Glencraig Primary, Craigavad, Holywood

Glenwood Primary, Belfast

Good Shepherd Primary, Belfast

Grange Park Primary  
Hezlett Primary, Castlerock  
Hillsborough Primary × 5  
Holy Cross Boys' Primary, Belfast  
Holy Cross Girls' Primary, Belfast  
Holy Family Primary, Ballymagroarty  
Holy Rosary Primary, Belfast  
Holy Trinity Primary, Cookstown  
Irvinestown Primary School  
Iveagh Primary  
Jones Memorial Primary, Enniskillen  
Keady Primary  
Killowen Primary  
Killyleagh Primary  
Kilrea Primary  
Limavady Central Primary  
Lisnagelvin Primary  
Londonderry Model  
Macosquin Primary  
Maghaberry Primary  
Maralin Village Primary  
Maze Primary  
Mersey St Primary, Belfast  
Millburn Primary  
Millisle Primary  
Moneynick Primary  
Mullavilly Primary  
Nazareth House Primary  
Newcastle Primary  
Newtownbreda Primary, Belfast  
Omagh County Primary  
Recarson Primary, Omagh  
Roan Primary, Eglis  
Sacred Heart Primary, Belfast  
Sacred Heart Primary, Lurgan  
Sandville Primary, Strabane  
Scoile Na Fuiseoige × 2  
Spa Primary  
St Anne's Primary, Belfast  
St Bernadette's Primary, Belfast  
St Brendan's Primary, Moyraverty  
St Brigid's Primary, Coalisland  
St Brigid's Primary, Crossmaglen × 2  
St Brigid's Primary, Omagh  
St Catherine's Primary, Belfast × 2  
St Colman's Primary, Lambeg  
St Colman's Bann Primary, Craigavon  
St Columbkilles Primary, Carrickmore  
St Comgall's Primary, Bangor

St Eithne's Primary  
St Francis Of Assisi, Keady  
St James Tandragee × 2  
St James's PS Whiteabbey × 3  
St John The Baptist Girls' Primary, Belfast  
St John The Baptist Primary, Belleek  
St John's Primary, Coleraine  
St John's Primary, Swatragh  
St John's Girls' Primary, Belfast  
St Joseph's Primary, Crossgar  
St Joseph's Primary, Ederney  
St Joseph's Primary, Belfast  
St Joseph's Primary, Carryduff  
St Joseph's Convent Primary, Newry  
St Malachy's Primary, Bangor  
St Malachy's Primary, Castlewellan  
St Malachy's Primary, Coleraine  
St Mary's Boys' Primary, Newcastle  
St Mary's Primary School, Armagh  
St Mary's Primary, Killyleagh  
St Mary's Star of the Sea Primary, Belfast  
St Mary's Girls' Primary, Newcastle  
St Mary's on the Hill Primary, Newtownabbey  
St Mary's Primary, Brookeborough  
St Mary's Primary, Cargan  
St Patrick's Primary, Derry  
St Patrick's Primary, Armagh  
St Patrick's Primary, Saul  
St Patrick's Primary, Belfast  
St Patrick's Primary, Crossmaglen  
St Patrick's Primary, Holywood  
St Patrick's Primary, Newry  
St Peter's Primary  
St Teresa's Primary, Omagh  
Steelstown Primary  
Straid Primary, Ballyclare  
Strand Primary  
Sullivan Upper Prep  
Taughmonagh Primary  
Tullycarnet Primary  
Whitehead Primary × 2

## Secondary School Responses

Anonymous Responses × 13  
Ballyclare Secondary  
Ballymoney High School × 2  
Belfast Boys Model  
CBS Secondary, Belfast  
Clondermot High School  
Coleraine Girls' Secondary  
Corpus Christi College  
Craigavon Senior High  
Donaghadee High  
Down Academy  
Dromore High  
Dunclug College × 10  
Glastry College  
Glengormley High × 5  
Integrated College Dungannon  
Massereene Community College  
Meánscoil Feirste School  
Newry High  
Omagh High School  
Orangefield High School  
Rathfriland High  
Saintfield High School  
Shimna Integrated College, Newcastle  
St Aloysius' High  
St Breacan's High  
St Cecilia's College, Derry  
St Colmcille's High  
St Columba's College  
St Columbanus College  
St Gemma's High  
St Genevieve's High School  
St Josephs High School, Coleraine  
St Louise's Comprehensive  
St Mary's College, Derry  
St Mary's College, Portglenone × 3  
St Mary's High, Newry  
St Patrick's College, Maghera × 2  
St Patrick's High, Dungiven  
St Patrick's High, Keady  
Tandragee Junior High

## **Grammar School Responses**

Anonymous Responses × 15  
Antrim Grammar × 2  
Aquinas Grammar × 2  
Assumption Grammar  
Ballyclare High School × 5  
Ballymena Academy × 9  
Banbridge Academy  
Belfast High School  
Belfast Royal Academy  
Coleraine Academical Institution  
Coleraine High  
Collegiate Grammar, Enniskillen  
Convent Grammar School, Strabane  
Dalriada School  
Dominican College, Belfast  
Down High School  
Friends' School  
Hunterhouse College  
Larne Grammar × 5  
Limavady Grammar School  
Loreto Grammar, Omagh  
Loreto College, Coleraine  
Lumen Christi College, Derry  
Methodist College  
Our Lady and St Patrick's College  
Rainey Endowed  
Rathmore Grammar × 14  
Regent House School × 2  
Royal Belfast Academical Institution  
Royal School Dungannon  
St Colman's College, Newry  
St Columb's College, Derry  
St MacNissis College  
St Mary's Grammar, Magherafelt  
St Patrick's, Downpatrick  
Strathearn School × 2  
Thornhill College, Derry × 4  
Victoria College

## **Special School Responses**

Anonymous Responses × 2

Ardmore House School

Cedar Lodge Special School

Clarawood Special School

Dunfane Special School

Greenwood House Special

Kilronan School

Longstone School

Loughan School, Ballymena

Mitchell House Special

Parkview Primary, Lisburn

Rathfriland Hill

Riverside School

St Francis De Sales

St Gerard's Educational Resource Centre

Thornfield House Special

Tor Bank School

## Organisation Responses

Association for Art and Design Education  
Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB)  
BELB, Science Advisory Group  
Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education (BIFHE)  
Care for Northern Ireland  
City of Belfast School of Music  
Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies in Northern Ireland (CADA)  
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)  
Council for Education in World Citizenship  
Democratic Dialogue  
Department for International Development, Glasgow (DFID)  
Diocesan Advisers for Religious Education, Archdiocese of Armagh  
Environmental Education Forum  
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland  
Forum on Community Understanding in Schools (FOCUS Group)  
General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland  
Gortatole Outdoor Education Centre  
Interboard Business Studies Forum × 2  
Interboard EMU/CH Panel  
Interboard Environment and Society Advisers' Group  
Interboard Geography Forum  
Interboard History Forum  
Interboard Home Economics Forum  
Interboard Religious Education Advisers  
Interboard Science Advisory Group  
Interboard Science and Technology Advisory Primary Group  
Laganside Development  
Marsh UK Ltd  
National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)  
National Society for Education in Art and Design  
North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB)  
NEELB Creative and Expressive Group  
NEELB English Literacy Team  
NEELB Field Officer, Post-primary Geography  
North Down and Ards Institute  
Northern Ireland Assembly Education Committee  
Northern Ireland Environment Link  
Páirtíocht Iarthar Bhéal Feirste (West Belfast Partnership)  
Royal Irish Academy  
RUC  
Save the Children  
School of Education, University of Ulster  
Sisters of Mercy Education and Justice Offices  
Social Democratic and Labour Party  
South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB)  
Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) × 3  
SELB (Environment and Society Team)

SELB (Literacy Team)  
SELB (Technology and Design Team)  
Speedwell Trust  
St Mary's University College × 2  
Stranmillis University College, Early Years Team  
Stranmillis University College, Education Department  
The Catholic Diocesan Advisers for Religious Education for the Archdiocese of Armagh and the Dioceses of Clogher, Derry, Down and Connor and Dromore (DANDI)  
The Corrymeela Community  
The Geographical Association  
The National Trust  
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  
The Ulster-Scots Leid Societie  
Transferor Representatives' Council  
Ulster Drama Association  
Western Education and Library Board (WELB)

### **Individual Responses**

Anonymous Responses × 17  
Dr Martin Brown, Bangor  
Laura Kwasniewska, Western Education and Library Board (WELB) History Advisor  
Mr Malcolm Curtis, Larne  
Norman Richardson, Stranmillis College, Belfast  
R Blair, Chief Examiner, GCSE German, Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)

## Appendix 2: List of Meetings with Stakeholders

### Consultation Meeting Presentations on the Northern Ireland Curriculum Review

*(The 56 meetings listed below have been held with educational partners and interest groups between Dec 99 and Jan 01. These meetings were in addition to the 20 seminars held with teachers in ELB Teachers' Centres during May and June 00).*

Department of Education	6 December 1999
Culture of Tolerance Group	15 February 2000
Environment and Sustainable Development Conference, Clandeboye	10 March
NEELB CASS Team	20 March
Transferers' Council	22 March
BELB CASS Team	23 March
CCEA Council	29 March
NEELB Secondary Heads Conference	6 April
Ulster Teachers' Unions	10 April
British Film Council	13 April
WELB CASS Team	14 April
SELB CASS Team	18 April
WEBs and CADA (Sustainable Development NGOs)	19 April
Joe Hinds, International Fund for Ireland	20 April
SEELB CASS Team	3 May
Joint Curriculum Review Liaison Group (Scotland, Wales, Republic Ireland)	5 May
NEELB Sub. Committee on Culture of Tolerance	8 May
CCEA Curriculum Review Launch of Consultation, Europa Hotel	10 May
T & E A Careers Group	18 May
Stranmillis College ITT staff	30 May
Amnesty International	30 May
JEDI (Youth Service)	2 June
Sports Council	5 June
Human Rights Commission	6 June
Information Age Initiative (Leapfrog), Department of Enterprise Trade and Invest	7 June
Stranmillis Focus (Forum for Community Understanding in Schools)	12 June
Department of Education Inspectorate Committee	15 June
Northern Ireland Assembly Education Committee Stormont	21 June
Catholic Council for Maintained Schools (CCMS)	21 June

Growth Challenge Employers Group	21 June
Minister of Education and Advisers	5 July
Queen's University School of Education ITT staff	23 June
Ulster Drama Association	23 August
Social, Civic and Political Education Project Teachers	6 September
NEELB CASS Team	7 September
St Mary's University College ITT staff	11 September
University of Ulster, School of Education ITT staff	14 September
New CCEA Council	12 September
Regional Training Unit	13 September
Primary Review Team	27 September
Aware Defeat Depression Conference	28 September
SEELB Nursery Principals' Conference	12 October
Irish National Teachers' Organisation	13 September
WELB Nursery Principals' Conference	18 October
Secondary Heads Association Conference	26 October
SELB CASS Team	3 November
Northern Ireland Teachers' Council	7 November
NEELB Nursery Principals' Conference	8 November
Department of Education Standing Conference	15 November
Outdoor Education Centres' Annual Conference	17 November
CCEA/NCCA Joint Council	22 November
Department of Education	27 November
Northern Ireland Association of Education and Library Boards	6 December
SEELB Primary Principals' Conferences	11, 15 and 25 Jan 01

## **Appendix 3: Published Response from the Education Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly**

### **MEMORANDUM FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE TO THE COUNCIL FOR THE CURRICULUM, EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT (CCEA) ON THEIR PROPOSALS FOR CHANGES TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK — PHASE 1 CONSULTATION**

#### **PURPOSE OF THIS MEMORANDUM**

The purpose of this Memorandum is:-

- to set out the Committee's overall views and specific comments on the proposed changes to the NI Curriculum Framework — Phase 1 Consultation; and
- to highlight the Committee's concerns regarding certain aspects of the proposals.

#### **Introduction**

The NI Assembly Education Committee very much appreciated the excellent presentation you and your colleagues gave to us on Thursday 22 June. It was a very useful exchange of views and gave us an opportunity to seek and understand your thinking behind the Review.

The Committee has now considered the content of your presentation and the Review papers you provided. The Committee fully recognises the importance of this Review and sees the curriculum as an essential, if not the key, building block within the education system.

The Committee also recognises the various and at times complex linkages between education, the economy and indeed society as a whole. Partnership between all those involved in the various education processes is vital for our future education and economic success. This partnership issue is something that the Committee will be mindful of in its deliberations on the proposals for the Programme for Government.

Our aim must be to ensure that we are preparing our young people for life in the 21st Century.

Before commenting on the detail of the Review the Committee believes that there are some overarching key issues.

#### **An Overview of the Key Issues Arising**

There is now a rapidly evolving and changing world, because of the acceleration of technological progress eg IT, Internet etc, it is therefore necessary to prepare young people for constant adaptation to new conditions throughout their lives. Make some reference to our new situation.

Education for all members of society, eg New TSN to help those who are not reaching their full potential to do so. In addition there is also a need to address low achievement and underachievement.

Globalisation of the economy with even greater interaction between countries. This requires an enhanced adaptability and flexibility with skills and competences being transportable.

Development of new and innovative competences at all levels and an increase of the general level of education of the whole country's workforce, ie the concepts of lifelong learning.

These key challenges must be addressed in the Review and in the new curriculum if we are to achieve our stated aim.

#### **Specific Comments on Proposals**

For ease of reference the Committee has structured its response under the same headings and numberings used in CCEA's Review Document.

#### **Review Objective 1: Clarify the Aim, Objectives and Values**

**Aim:** The Committee would support the thinking behind and the revised aim for the NI Curriculum.

**Objectives:** The Committee agrees the importance of the need to ensure that the Curriculum Objectives are both overlapping and interdependent. It recognised and welcomed CCEA's attempts to illustrate this in an easily understood

format, ie Table 1 of the document. The Committee also noted the need to perhaps make some statutory changes, eg Personal Development, Citizenship and Employability. (Page 12 refers)

**Values:** The Committee noted the development of and the setting out of the values that underpin the Curriculum.

### **Review Objective 2: Clarify Generic Skills**

The Committee would be generally supportive of the CCEA's proposal for the generic skills set out in Table 2 of the Review document.

However it still wishes to express the view that there must be no diminution in the importance placed on numeracy and literacy at the expense of other skills.

Recent statistics from the Training and Employment Agency indicate that 19% of 16-25 year olds are either functionally illiterate or semi-illiterate. These statistics plus other worrying evidence from teachers supports the Committee's view that numeracy and literacy must continue to take top priority.

### **Review Objective 3: Improve Relevance and Enjoyment**

The Committee noted the emphasis placed by CCEA in its review document and presentation to the issue of relevance.

The academic/vocational tension in particular was highlighted during the question and answer session. There is a need to create equality of opportunity and esteem whilst recognising the differences that exist amongst young people and their abilities.

The Committee would wish to see this tension addressed in the next phase of the Review.

The Committee would support the introduction of specific programmes for Personal Education, Citizenship and Employability as statutory entitlements at the relevant Key Stages. The Committee accepts the importance of these programmes but it does have concerns regarding how these additional programmes will be fitted into an already full timetable. The Committee would request further comment from CCEA on these concerns.

### **Review Objective 4: Improve Balance, Coherence and Flexibility at each Key Stage**

**Key Stage 1 Proposals:** The Committee is aware from the CCEA's presentation, the summary of written responses they have received to date and from other presentations made to the Committee of the "initiative overload" that teachers, particularly at Primary School level, are experiencing. The Committee is concerned that any further change to the Key Stage 1 curriculum would add more stress to this teacher grouping. There is, as stated in the review document, a marked impact on teacher training. Parental perception in relation to reading/writing would also need careful consideration. Full time quality pre-school education is still, the Committee feels, very much not the norm for most children and this would need to be factored into any proposed changes.

**Key Stage 2 Proposals:** Evidence suggests that the Transfer Test impacts heavily on the curriculum for pupils at this particular stage. With the impending publication of the "Gallagher" Report CCEA should ensure that their proposals are flexible enough to cope with any possible change to the selection procedures.

**Key Stage 3 Proposals:** The Committee acknowledges the need to improve the balance within the curriculum at this particular stage, as it will undoubtedly impact upon the pupil performance. Such proposed changes to the curriculum will have considerable resource implications for all education providers.

**Key Stage 4:** The Committee would ask CCEA to provide them with the further short consultation paper on this due for publication in early Autumn.

### **Special Needs Education**

The Committee was pleased to note that the Review document included a proposal to change the current access statement to promote a more inclusive approach for pupils with special needs.

### **Resources**

The Committee is well aware of the many conflicting resource priorities within education and as highlighted in the questions by Committee members this review will obviously have a significant resource impact for all aspects of school budgets eg demands on teacher time for training, new teaching materials and the development of new schemes of work. The Committee acknowledges that the document recognises these constraints but in an attempt to quantify the possible resource impact would ask that CCEA produce costs of the implementation of the review. This cost information would be of benefit when considering future spending priorities.

# Appendix 4: Proposed Framework for the Northern Ireland Curriculum

*(subject to minor refinement in the light of consultation)*

## Aim

The Northern Ireland curriculum aims to enable young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

## Curriculum Objectives

The Northern Ireland Curriculum should provide learning opportunities for each young person to develop as:

1. *an individual;*
2. *a contributor to society; and*
3. *a contributor to the economy and the environment.*

Throughout the curriculum, by taking appropriate opportunities to focus on the **key elements in bold**, teachers should help pupils to:

<i>As an individual</i>	<i>As a contributor to society</i>	<i>As a contributor to the economy and environment</i>
<p><b>(personal understanding)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respect themselves, understand their rights and responsibilities;</li> <li>• understand and manage their emotions;</li> <li>• learn how to learn and be committed to learning;</li> <li>• be aware of their creative potential;</li> <li>• become self-reliant.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(citizenship)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respect the equal rights of others;</li> <li>• recognise the interdependence of people, communities and the environment;</li> <li>• be willing to negotiate and compromise;</li> <li>• use democratic means to influence change;</li> <li>• contribute to the welfare of school, the community and the environment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(employability)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be aware of the impact of technology and global markets on work patterns and prospects;</li> <li>• be proactive, enterprising, adaptable and open to new ideas;</li> <li>• enhance career options through life-long learning;</li> <li>• be aware of the rights of workers and employers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(mutual understanding)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respect and co-operate with others;</li> <li>• manage and resolve conflict;</li> <li>• develop and sustain safe, caring relationships;</li> <li>• learn the skills of parenting.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(cultural understanding)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognise the richness and diversity of cultural influences in contemporary society;</li> <li>• engage with human cultural achievement in a range of forms and contexts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(economic awareness/sustainable development)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand the economic interdependence of individuals, organisations and communities locally and globally;</li> <li>• critically examine how wealth is created and distributed;</li> <li>• make balanced and informed economic judgements;</li> <li>• be discerning and effective consumers;</li> <li>• plan and manage personal finances effectively.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(personal health)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• live a healthy lifestyle and make healthy choices;</li> <li>• contribute positively to their peer group.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(media awareness)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be critically aware of the range of print, sound, moving image and graphic media;</li> <li>• assess the role and influence of media within society.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(environmental responsibility)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• think globally, act locally;</li> <li>• cut down on waste and prevent pollution;</li> <li>• save energy and natural resources;</li> <li>• look after the local environment;</li> <li>• encourage bio-diversity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(moral character)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show fairness and integrity in dealing with others;</li> <li>• be reliable and committed to tasks;</li> <li>• take responsibility for choices and actions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(ethical awareness)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be aware of some of the dilemmas arising from scientific, technological and environmental change;</li> <li>• assess the human and environmental impact of ethical choices and take action as appropriate.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>(spiritual awareness)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop an inner appreciation of life purpose;</li> <li>• develop the personal strengths and resources to cope with adversity.</li> </ul>		

# Framework for Generic Skills in the Curriculum

Personal Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Thinking Skills	Learning Skills	ICT Skills	Physical Skills
<p><b>Personal skills</b> are those skills which are necessary for effective operation at an individual level. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Self management:</b> the ability to recognise and deal with personal characteristics, strengths and limitations, emotions, behaviours and experiences in a range of situations and contexts;</li> <li>• <b>Self-reliance:</b> the ability to be self-directed, to work independently and to undertake and complete tasks on an individual basis;</li> <li>• <b>Assertiveness:</b> the ability to express a personal view in a positive and non-threatening manner;</li> <li>• <b>Language and literacy:</b> the ability to engage with the spoken and written word in various forms;</li> <li>• <b>Application of number:</b> the ability to select and apply a range of numerical skills to real situations and contexts in order to meet a desired outcome;</li> <li>• <b>Creativity:</b> the ability to be imaginative and inventive in creating outcomes and products.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Interpersonal skills</b> are those skills which are necessary for effective interaction with others. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication:</b> the ability to select and apply a range of appropriate communication skills in order to express oneself effectively within a range of situations and contexts;</li> <li>• <b>Working with others:</b> the ability to collaborate with others in working towards a common goal.</li> <li>• <b>Empathy:</b> the ability to engage with the feelings and contexts experienced by others;</li> <li>• <b>Leadership:</b> the ability to assume responsibility and to motivate others towards the achievement of a particular goal.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Thinking skills</b> are those intellectual skills which are necessary for the realisation of human potential. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Critical thinking:</b> the ability to use a range of analytical, evaluative and decision-making processes in order to achieve a reasoned outcome;</li> <li>• <b>Creative thinking:</b> the ability to generate “new” ideas, visualise processes and imagine outcomes;</li> <li>• <b>Caring thinking:</b> the ability to be sensitive to the contexts, experiences and needs of others;</li> <li>• <b>Problem solving:</b> the ability to select and apply a range of appropriate skills to meet an identified need or produce a desired outcome.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning skills</b> are those skills which enable the individual to engage with uncertainty and address the process of change. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Self-assessment:</b> the ability to reflect on personal strengths and weakness as a basis for identifying learning needs and evaluating new learning;</li> <li>• <b>Learning styles:</b> the ability to identify, expand and monitor preferred ways of learning;</li> <li>• <b>Goal-setting:</b> the ability to set short and longer-term targets for learning and to identify strategies by which they can be met;</li> <li>• <b>Information handling:</b> the ability to access knowledge and to devise strategies for assimilation and recall;</li> <li>• <b>Improving own learning and performance:</b> the ability to select and apply a range of appropriate skills to promote self improvement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ICT skills</b> are the means by which individuals can engage effectively with a fast-changing, technological world of information and communication. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication:</b> the ability to use ICT as a tool for accessing and communicating ideas using a range of media including print, sound, moving image and graphics;</li> <li>• <b>Information handling:</b> the ability to access, store, manipulate and present information;</li> <li>• <b>Modelling:</b> the ability to use ICT to create and use models and simulations;</li> <li>• <b>Measurement and Control:</b> the ability to use ICT to measure the physical environment and control events.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical skills</b> are those skills which are necessary for efficient body movement and effective manipulation of physical objects in a range of contexts. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gross motor movement:</b> the ability to control limbs and perform large bodily movements;</li> <li>• <b>Fine motor movement:</b> the ability to manipulate small objects with precision and to co-ordinate hand and eye;</li> <li>• <b>Observation:</b> the ability to focus visual attention;</li> <li>• <b>Audition:</b> the ability to focus listening attention.</li> </ul>